

REMARKS

This amendment is responsive to the final Office Action¹ mailed on February 24, 2006. Claims 1-8 and 25-32 were pending with claims 1, 5, 25 and 29 being the pending independent claims.

Claims 1-8 and 25-32 are finally-rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. patent 6,466,937 to Fascenda, (hereinafter "Fascenda").

Applicants note that the Examiner has found allowable subject matter. Claims 2, 6, 26 and 30 are objected to as being dependent upon rejected base claims but, according to the final Office Action, page 3, these claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of their respective base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants acknowledge the Examiner's finding of allowable subject matter with appreciation.

Allowable dependent claims 2, 6, 26 and 30 are hereby incorporated into their respective independent claims. Claims 2, 6, 26 and 30 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

Claims 9-24 and 33-48 were previously withdrawn from consideration responsive to a restriction requirement dated on or about August 25, 2004 with which Applicants disagreed for reasons previously given in their response filed on February 17, 2005.

Claims 9-24 and 33-48 are hereby canceled without prejudice or disclaimer and

¹ The Office Action may contain a number of statements characterizing the cited reference and/or the claims which Applicants may not expressly identify herein. Regardless of whether or not any such statement is identified herein, Applicants do not automatically subscribe to, or acquiesce in, any such statement. Further, silence with regard to rejection of a dependent claim, when such claim depends, directly or indirectly, from an independent claim which Applicants deem allowable for reasons provided herein, is not acquiescence to such rejection of that dependent claim, but is recognition by Applicants that such previously lodged rejection is moot based on remarks and/or amendments presented herein relative to that independent claim.

Applicants expressly reserve their rights to file divisional applications with respect to any or all of these claims.

Therefore, claims 1, 3-5, 7-8, 25, 27-29 and 31-32 are pending.

As noted, Applicants have amended their independent claims 1, 5, 25 and 29 to include the allowable limitations of claims 2, 6, 26 and 30, respectively, and have canceled claims 2, 6, 26 and 30 without prejudice or disclaimer. Other amendments made to other dependent claims were made solely to conform their dependencies to non-canceled claims.

Accordingly, all pending independent claims and, therefore, all pending dependent claims are now allowable. The application should be passed to issue.

CONCLUSION

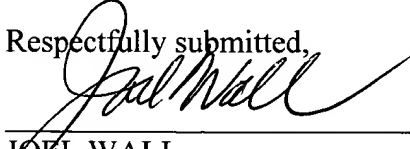
All pending claims are allowable in view of the amendments made herein.

Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested. It is submitted that this amendment, after final, should be entered because the claims are amended solely to put all claims into a condition for allowance, no new matter being added and no further searching or consideration being required.

This application was originally filed with 48 claims which were subjected to the above-noted restriction requirement. Applicants expressly reserve their rights to file divisional applications with respect to claims 9-24 and 33-48 which had been withdrawn responsive to the restriction requirement and which are canceled herewith without prejudice or disclaimer.

To the extent that an extension of time may be needed in order to enter this amendment in this case, please consider this response as including a petition under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 for such extension of time. Please charge any fee for such petition or any other fee or cost that may be incurred by way of this amendment to Patent Office deposit account number 05-0889.

Respectfully submitted,



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April 20, 2006